

Minutes of the OGP Steering Committee Meeting Held on Wednesday 2nd February, 2022.

The maiden Open Government Partnership Steering Committee meeting for 2022 was held on Wednesday 2nd February, 2022, in the conference room of National Council for Civic Education and Development (NaCCED). The meeting was called to order by the OGP Coordinator Mrs. Hannah Jimmy on behalf of the chairman NaCCED who was busy with other important matters. She apologised for the late start of the meeting and said we should go ahead since we had more than a quorum.

She informed members present that the chairman will join the meeting later to make a statement to woo members of the steering committee to be committed to attending meetings which had been the greatest challenge to the success of the steering committee in achieving its goals. Since this is a new year and about to begin the process of committing ourselves to a new NAP, it is but crucial that we attend meetings regularly, she continued.

The meeting was to validate the draft National Action Plan IV. In discussing the draft, some concerns were raised with the review of what was achieved in the NAP III. Eleanor Thompson of NAMATI, raised a concern about the establishment of the Access to Justice Directorate mentioned in the draft which she challenged. She said that was discussed in the last expert meeting at the Justice Sector coordinating Office and the steering committee was informed that the directorate was yet to be set up.

Another contentious issue under the commitment on Education raised by Mr. Charles Kamara was the collaboration of the Teaching Service Commission with the National Civil Registration Authority on the harmonisation of data for teachers. This was confirmed by Mr. Abdul Rahman Sesay of BAN and informed the committee that, that was in fact the reason why some teachers' salaries were withheld because of the discrepancy in their data. Mr. Kamara confirmed that a lot was achieved under the education commitment as mentioned in the review.

Under Improving Public Services, a concern was raised about the creation Open Data Portal, that it was yet to be created. But Mr. Alhassan Sesay from the Right to Access Information Commission confirmed that the Open Data Portal was indeed up and running and hosted at the Ministry of Information and Communications. He further informed the committee that RAIC has sent PDF forms out to the public about this. On the whole, the review process of the NAP III went well.

Coming to business proper, the validation of the NAP IV, the Coordinator went through the draft and comments were made by members of the committee. Lots of comments and changes were made on the draft. Under the Open parliament commitment, a brought over from NAP III, it was agreed that, although much was achieved in the last NAP, there was still more to do. For instance, Section 75 of the Standing Orders is recommended in the draft NAP IV to be expunged. This section contradicts with the spirit of Open Parliament as it prevents members or even the public to discuss anything discussed in the committees which is seen as contempt of parliament. This was viewed as way a of muzzling the openness of Parliament. It was also agreed that the Parliamentary App and annual reports be uploaded on their website. On the whole, the open Parliament commitment for NAP IV has eight milestones but there were certain issues to be clarified by Diamond who was absent because he was bereaved.

The other two commitments, access to justice has four commitments and open elections with six commitments were also discussed and some amendments made but there were certain issues that needed further clarifications. It was therefore decided that the document be sent to members to make inputs and be returned by Friday 4th February, 2022. It was also suggested that the document

be presented for cabinet hearing next week but Mr Konuwa informed the committee that the President will be out of the country but would inform the committee of the appropriate time to do so

Action Points

- Mr Wilfred Bangura from the Anti Corruption Commission was to confirm with his boss to make clarifications on certain things mentioned in the document.
- National Elections Commission to respond to some issue in the commitment to open Elections.

In attendance were:

1. Mr. Charles kamara- EFA
2. Wilfred Bangura- ACC
3. Edwin B Peacock -MIC
4. Sheku Ahmed Koroma- NEC-SL
5. Eleanor Thompson – NAMATI
6. Alhassan Sesay -RAIC
7. Daniel Sesay – NAMATI
8. Abdul Raman Sesay -BAN
9. Aloma John Konuwa – Cabsec
10. Haroun Sheriff – JSCO
11. Lavina Banduah – TI-SL
12. Sahr kendema – CGG
13. Makai S kamara – CGG
14. Hannah Hamida Jimmy- OGP
15. David K. biandoma -OGP